

Exhibit 74

Addiction program, others plead with county for money Rosary Hall leaders cite 40 percent drop in funding this fiscal year

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ABSTRACT

Dan Brady recommended the second-largest allocation, asking for another \$1.6 million to the board next year with \$445,000 earmarked for Rosary Hall. Because Rosary Hall is the only medically based inpatient detoxification program in the region, it often treats the most difficult cases of heroin addiction as well as alcoholics, who could die during withdrawal.

FULL TEXT

Note: Distribution zones: All

CHUCK CROW THE PLAIN DEALER Kelli, a recovering heroin addict who declined to provide her last name, says she would be dead without the help of Rosary Hall's detox program. "Straight up," Kelli said. "I would be dead." ; ; CHUCK CROW THE PLAIN DEALER Orlando Howard is clinical manager and quality improvement specialist at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center. ; ; CHUCK CROW THE PLAIN DEALER Chris Adelman is medical director of Rosary Hall, which took a cut in state and county funding. ; ; CHUCK CROW THE PLAIN DEALER Orlando Howard is clinical manager and quality improvement specialist at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center.

At a time when need across the region is skyrocketing, leaders from the venerable drug and alcohol treatment center Rosary Hall are pleading for money.

"We face an epidemic in alcohol and prescription drug abuse," Rosary Hall's associate medical director, Dr. Ted Parran, told Cuyahoga County Council during a budget hearing Monday.

The center's leaders plan to return again next Monday with a recovering addict to press their point.

Rosary Hall, which is housed at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center near downtown Cleveland, is one of many social agencies lining up in front of County Council this month as its members dig into their first biannual budget process.

The nearly 60-year-old institution has Northeast Ohio's only medically based inpatient detoxification program and treats about 900 people each year. It saw its annual funding from state and county sources drop by 40 percent or \$334,600 this fiscal year, which runs from July 2011 through June 2012.

To cope, Rosary Hall's doctors have begun reducing the length of inpatient detoxification from the typical five days to four.

They expect to treat 200 fewer patients this year, and wait times to get in for treatment are on the rise.

Addicts put their name on a list and then call back daily -- sometimes for four or five weeks -- to see if a bed has opened up.

"The phone rings every day," said Orlando Howard, clinical manager and quality improvement specialist for St. Vincent. "That's how desperate people are, especially when they don't have insurance."

In the coming week, at least two dozen people advocating for agencies like Rosary Hall plan to attend County Council's public sessions and ask for money, according to leaders at the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County.

The board, which distributes state and local money to about 60 social agencies, said the onslaught comes after

years of funding reductions and increased need.

County support for the board – and, therefore, the mental health and addiction agencies that the board provides money to – has dropped 11 percent to \$33.6 million annually from \$37.7 million in 2009. Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald has proposed the board get that same \$33.6 million each of the next two years.

The current funding is a disaster, said board Chief Executive William Denihan. Compounding the county cuts is a 30 percent reduction in state funding.

"It's created the perfect tragic storm," Denihan said. "We know that these services save lives. That's the business we're in."

A recent Cuyahoga County needs-assessment survey revealed that 5,310 people with mental health issues and 1,179 with alcohol and other drug addiction weren't being served, Denihan said. The board needs money restored to its budget and then some to help with the increasing need, he said.

On Wednesday, County Council members responded to the budget proposal with their own suggestions and provided a bit of hope for the social agencies. Council members are expected to pass the budget out of committee by the end of the month and approve it before the end of the year.

Several council members suggested increasing the subsidy to the board. Yvonne Conwell suggested the biggest subsidy increase to the board, stating that she wanted to allocate an additional \$5 million to "reinstate some subsidy that has been cut by the state." Dan Brady recommended the second-largest allocation, asking for another \$1.6 million to the board next year with \$445,000 earmarked for Rosary Hall.

Because Rosary Hall is the only medically based inpatient detoxification program in the region, it often treats the most difficult cases of heroin addiction as well as alcoholics, who could die during withdrawal.

A typical patient can spend four or five months going through the program, which starts with days in detox and is followed by four to five weeks of daily three-hour sessions of group therapy. After that, there are weekly follow-ups for group therapy sessions.

On a recent sunny afternoon, recovering heroin addict Kelli sat in the serenity room at Rosary Hall to talk about how "they didn't treat me like the stigma addict out there. They truly want to help."

Kelli, who uses her first name only to retain anonymity, had no way to pay for treatment. Rosary Hall staff helped her find transitional housing to keep her away from the environment where she used drugs.

"I'm taking advantage of everything they offered to me," she said.

She has been clean five months – the longest she has gone without drugs in 30 years – and credits Rosary Hall with her life.

Since she began the program, eight of her friends have overdosed. Kelli has no doubt that if she hadn't gotten in, she would have kept using.

"I'd be dead. Straight up," she said. "I would be dead."

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